

City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 20, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Charles Houston Center

901 Wythe Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

Summary Minutes

Members Present: Jennifer Atkins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs; Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson, and Catherine Poulin.

Absent: Alexis Browand, Emma Schutzius, high school members.

RPCA Staff Present: James Spengler, Director; Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations; David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Public Information, Special Events, and Waterfront Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Projects; Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator; Sheila Whiting, Regional Program Director Charles Houston, and Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

Absent: William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services.

Guests: Paul Gilbert, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), Sue Dingwell, Jeannie Gardner, Susan Gitlin, Environmental Policy Commission, Barbara Goodman, Dave Levy, Bonnie Petry, Peggy Stevens, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, Elizabeth Wright.

- I. **Call to Order:** Jennifer Atkins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs. Coleman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the procedures for the public hearing and meeting.
- II. **Public Hearing on Cameron Run Area Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan:** See Staff Reports. To view presentation, go to:
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/CameronRunParkPlan.pdf>. Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator provided the presentation, she noted a correction to the agenda which inadvertently refers to this as a synthesis plan, which dates back to the 1981 lease. She said the planning area has been expanded, and it is called the Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan for the Cameron Run area. Durham reviewed the map and provided background information, she said the green shows all the open space in the area per the City's GIS, she noted that Ben Brenman pond is incorrectly labeled as Lake Cook. Durham reviewed existing conditions which include: bike trails, Hensley Park (outlined in red), Cameron Run Regional Park (which includes Great Waves Water Park, batting cages, mini golf, play structures, picnic shelters. Hensley and Cameron Run are the two active recreation areas. Lake Cook is labeled passive recreation use. The City's mulch site, just above Hensley Park, and the Animal Shelter are outlined. To the far west is Clermont Natural Area, which is a City-owned open space zoned property. She said the area is currently not accessible to the public.

Durham showed a close up of "Cameron Run Regional Park Today." She said the new play feature does not show up on the map. In response to Cromley, Durham said the rail lines and

property to the north are owned by Norfolk Southern, but are not part of this plan. She said the focus is to look at open space planning in the West End of Alexandria in a coordinated effort.

Background: Alexandria is a member of a group of 6 jurisdictions that support the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks). Other members include the City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, Arlington County, Fairfax County and Loudoun County. Alexandria paid the Park Authority \$652,472 this budget year (operating and capital).

The City has a lease with NOVA Parks for the Cameron Run Regional Park property, which is zoned Public Open Space (POS), and has been leased by NOVA Parks since 1981. The planning process was prompted by NOVA Parks's submission of a proposal to add a new feature to the Great Waves Water Park (Master Blaster). This requires a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP).

NOVA Parks current lease has six years remaining on it, and prior to making any further significant investment, they requested that the City extend or renew the lease for another forty (40) years. Durham said both the DSUP and lease extension require City Council approval.

The City's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) wants to ensure the City is meeting current community needs for parks, open space, and additional recreation needs as indicated by the recent Community Needs Assessment and other requirements before the City makes a decision to enter into a 40-year lease. Accordingly, the City initiated a public planning process for the park and open space areas: Cameron Run Regional Park site, Hensley Park (recently a citywide park plan was completed); Lake Cook, Clermont Natural Areas and connecting trails, up to Tarleton Park, and up to Ben Brenman Park.

As part of the process staff reviewed several City plans:

- Open Space Master Plan;
- Urban Forestry Master Plan;
- Eco-City Action Plan,
- Citywide Parks Plan, and
- Eisenhower West Small Area Plan (SAP) initiative, which is in progress.

Plan boundaries for Eisenhower West include Hensley Park and Clermont Natural Areas, and stops short of the Cameron Run Regional Park site. Durham said there is some overlap in the Coordinated Development District (CDD).

Additionally, Chesapeake Bay regulations require that the City through its Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) and Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) make significant stormwater improvements. OEQ identified design improvements to help capture a significant amount of stormwater at Lake Cook to help the City meet its goals (See Handout Lake Cook Retrofit Project). That is in the early stages of the design process.

In addition, staff hired Leisure Vision consultants who conducted a Citywide Regional Parks Survey to see what Alexandria residents want to see in regional park facilities. Leisure Vision also completed a 2013 Needs Assessment for the department of RPCA.

See Findings Report for a Statistically Valid Regional Parks Survey by ETC Institute, October 2014, and Executive Summary. Durham reviewed the survey results; she said the survey is

statistically valid and had a good response rate. The goal was to find out if Alexandrians are using the Cameron Run Regional Park, and this was confirmed by the survey (See full survey for further information):

- Cameron Run Regional Park Visitation (slide 8):
55% of households have visited Cameron Run Regional Park over the past two years; and of these 60% visited 2-5 times over the past two years.
- Facilities Used or Visited Over the Past 2 Years (Q5):
Wave Pool 28%, Miniature Golf 25%, Water Slides 22%, Picnic Shelter 18%, Playground 15%, Batting Cages 13% (see slide).
- Facilities Respondents Households Would Use at the Regional Parks (Q-9). Walking and Biking Trails scored the highest at 85%; Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats 56%; Picnic Shelters/Meeting Space 43% (see slide).
- Facilities Households Would Use Most Often (Slide 12): Walking and Biking Trails 72%; Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats 31%); Outdoor Swimming Pools 18%, Picnic Shelters/Meeting Space 16% (see slide).
- Maximum Travel Time to Use the Facility they would use the most often in Q 10 (Q11).
46% of respondents will drive up to 30 minutes to get to a regional park, 21% would drive up to 15 minutes (see slide).
- Parks and Recreation Facilities Respondent Households Have a Need For (Q5): Walking trails scored highest at 85%; Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat 67%, Bike trails 57%, Indoor exercise & fitness facilities 52% (see slide). Durham said this shows similarities with RPCA's 2013 Needs Assessment.

Durham said public feedback (see slide) shows that there is limited parking during peak use at Hensley Park. This is addressed in the Citywide Park Plan for Hensley Park. Staff also heard that during peak times at the wave pool at Cameron Run Regional Park, parking is also limited. Nearby residents stressed the importance of maintaining the amount of parking adjacent to Lake Cook.

An Eisenhower West planning poll was conducted, and feedback was obtained from the Environmental Policy Commission and Alexandria/Arlington Tree Stewards, which show the importance of maintaining open space and protecting native woodlands in the Cameron Run area.

Coleman asked what was the form of response from the EPC, and was it the official position of the group. Durham said she's not sure if it was an official position or feedback from certain members.

Durham reported that feedback was also obtained from Mr. Gilbert, the Executive Director of NOVA Parks (see report). NOVA Parks supports Lake Cook improvements as long as there is no impact to the Great Waves Water Park operations. Durham said City staff discussed that with Lake Cook improvements that the trail access behind the regional park is an active area for their back of house operations, this could pose a conflict. NOVA Parks said nature trails are more

appropriate for Clermont Natural Area (further west), and not for the Cameron Run Regional Park site. They also hope to maintain options for potential future expansion of the Great Waves Water Park at Cameron Run Regional Park. Durham said that one element of NOVA Parks's proposed improvements to Cameron Run Park is to improve parking. She said that the parking reconfiguration will provide more spaces and help meet landscape guidelines.

Durham said based on the public feedback, the survey and other studies in the area, RPCA staff developed a Concept Plan for the proposed Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan for the Cameron Run Area. The red areas are still active recreation zones. Hensley Park is an overlay to the Citywide Park Plan. The City's Mulch Site is also identified as an active recreation area. Durham said it is zoned public open space (POS), it has a SUP for the mulch site and has gone to City Council, and they have support for keeping the mulch area there at this time. She said that no other City land has been identified at this time for this use. If another site is found it would make sense for the mulch site to be reverted back to its intended use as active recreation.

The area behind the Animal Shelter and other side of batting cages is shown as a protected natural area (just over 4.0 acres of native woodland), and Clermont Natural Area preserved is a protected area. On Clermont Cove, the City is working with Peggy Stevens, Director of the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) to protect this area.

Durham said in addition to looking at improving connections throughout the site for trails which is a high usage need in City, for any of the trails and natural areas staff would propose they be nature trails and soft trails, and not paved or formal bike trails. She said there are existing bike paths along Eisenhower Avenue. Staff is also looking at improving the connection between Hensley Park and Cameron Run Regional Park (both active uses) this may happen through the Eisenhower West SAP.

Durham reviewed Key Plan Elements (See slide). She said plans are in the early design stage for Lake Cook and show potential for a loop trail or additional trails around Lake Cook, other amenities and protection of existing natural area.

Coleman asked if this is currently protected or proposed. Durham said it is proposed to be protected. Durham said at the beginning she mentioned staff reviewed existing City plans. She said each plan contains specific goals for protecting open space (See Slide).

Next Steps:

1. Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation on Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan for Cameron Run Area (November 20, 2014).
2. Ongoing Implementation of the Citywide Parks Plan for Joseph Hensley Park, Holmes Run Park and Ben Brenman/Boothe Park.
3. Lake Cook Stormwater Retrofit Project Design and Implementation.
4. City Council Consideration of Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's Request for Lease Extension and Improvement Plan (February 2015).

(continued)

Questions and Comments from Commissioners:

Q. Do we know who uses Cameron Run Regional Park?

A. Durham said figures from NOVA Parks show 30,000 Alexandrians used the park last year. (Gilbert said 30,000 are strictly for water park users, if you include other amenities you get up to 80,000 users a year.)

Q. Are figures available on other jurisdictions?

A. Gilbert said he can obtain this information.

(Durham said it is challenging because cars from neighboring jurisdictions do not have parking stickers, which is one way used to track users.)

Q. What is the total count of people using the water park?

A. Gilbert said total count is over 90,000 a year.

Q. What is the fee structure and do Alexandria residents receive a discount, and are fees offset by the land the City allows NOVA Parks to use for the park?

A. Gilbert said all participating member jurisdictions receive a discount. He offered no response about the offset.

Q. What is involved in expanding the water park? Will it be expanded up or out?

A. Durham said it could be expanded either way, and either way would require rezoning or a Special Use Permit.

Q. Why does this require a Special Use Permit (SUP)?

A. Durham said a SUP is required due to the height limits. In the public open space (POS) zone (created in 1992) the height limit is currently 15 ft., an SUP would allow heights up to 30 ft. It would need a site plan considering the extent of the expansion.

Q. If the waterpark is expanded, where would it take place and if it will affect the tree area?

A. Durham pointed out the Resource Protection Area (RPA) area near Lake Cook. She said the only area left for expansion is where the woods are now and just east of the batting cage.

Q. Does the red outline distinguish the RPA, and does the RPA encroach into the park?

A. Durham said the red lines are active recreation areas, and the RPA is within 100 ft. of the water. Staff will provide a map with the RPA for the next meeting.

Q. What is the timetable for the City's acquisition of the Clermont Natural Area, excluding Clermont Cove?

A. Durham said the City owns the Clermont Natural Area. For Clermont Cove there is no timeline. It is owned by Norfolk Southern and identified as a priority. Staff is partnering with the NVCT, who is working with Norfolk Southern. The City's goal is to preserve this area as open space.

Q. What is envisioned regarding connecting Hensley Park and the waterpark area, and would it be done at ground level?

A. Durham said that would be challenging. Staff would need to work with the Department of T&ES to see if there is a way to improve pedestrian connections

and access to the trail, this would be a long term goal. Durham said no design work has been done yet and staff is not proposing a bridge at this time.

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director NOVA Parks (See Attachment, letter to Commission, dated November, 20 2014), requesting that the P&RC not to endorse the Cameron Run Area Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan as submitted by RPCA:

Gilbert said NOVA Parks has been in existence as a Regional Park agency since 1959, and partnering with Alexandria City since 1972. NOVA Parks is a very unique organization and the only regional park agency in Virginia, and specializes in developing unique destination sites. They manage over 11,000 acres of parkland, and 100 miles of trails.

NOVA Parks operates two sites in Alexandria: the Carlyle House (Old Town) and Cameron Run Regional Water Park (Eisenhower Ave.). As heard from Durham, originally Cameron Run the land was larger, but over the years the City reclaimed some of the property and the leased area now ends around the Animal Shelter.

Gilbert said that the NOVA Parks has developed a fantastic water park, which attracts over 90,000 visitors a year and is a great economic opportunity for the City, and serves City residents. A recent City survey showed that 80,000 people visited the park within a two year period. They have done their own counts and water park admissions alone account for 30,000 visitors.

Gilbert said NOVA Parks does not support the Plan as presented. The reason is that a red line has been drawn that limits their ability to expand. Gilbert said that over the last year, this is not the first round in these issues. He said about a year ago there were efforts to get Cameron Run Regional Park involved in the Eisenhower West SAP planning process. Around January 2014, he received call from Deputy City Manager, Mark Jinks, who said their application for the parking lot, Master Blaster, and lease was going to be put on hold for two years or more.

Gilbert said NOVA Parks individually spoke with City Council members, the majority said they supported the partnership with City. Some members conveyed their thoughts to the City Manager; and NOVA Parks was later reengaged in the process. During the re-engagement, a process was developed by the Director of RPCA which he believes is largely bureaucratic, and takes the focus off their real goal of their lease and a permit for additional water features. He is pleased input was included from NOVA Parks.

Gilbert said that Cameron Run Regional Park is a world-class water park which draws many people, and to keep the park relevant, there needs to be continued reinvestment over time. He said during the last thirty-three years NVRPA has made significant investments in Cameron Run Regional Park, and they would like to be able to manage it over the next 40 years, the same way they have been doing.

While the NVRPA loves open space and trails, he believes that efforts to put in trails around the park (for passive recreation use) will box in the existing water park and limit future planning efforts. He believes the plan is an attempt by the City to exercise control over the park.

Gilbert said he hopes the Park and Recreation Commission will provide a recommendation to City Council that supports continuation of what NOVA Parks already has, i.e., a long-term lease at Cameron Run Regional Park, which will allow them to develop the park over the time.

NOVA Parks will apply for the proper permits and go through the public process. He said that the NOV Parks wants to make Cameron Run Regional Park the best water park it can be, but can't do this if they are constrained.

NOVA Parks is happy to work with T&ES stormwater management staff on the Lake Cook project. They would not support the trail that would run from Lake Cook behind the water park facilities.

Coleman asked if there were any follow-up questions for Mr. Gilbert from the Commission.

Q. In terms of leasing the land, NOVA Parks doesn't pay anything?

A. (Gilbert) Correct.

Q. What is the rationale for a 40-year lease term? Is this a financial calculation, or because this is what is currently in place? **A. (Gilbert).** The rationale is the substantial investment in infrastructure made over the last decades by NOVA Parks, and NOVA Parks continues to invest in the facility. The new water feature will cost over \$2 million. With only six years remaining on the current lease, NVRPA wants to make sure they are there for the long term.

Q. Is the 40-year lease based on amortization? **A. (Gilbert)** A 40 year lease is what NOVA Parks had before, and time tends to go fast. NOVA Parks has also invested a lot in the City and built a facility that is a major draw.

Q. How much revenue is generated annually?

A. Gilbert said admissions generates approximately \$1.2 -\$1.3 million.

Q. 1) What is NOVA Parks's mission--is it to provide amenities that other municipalities cannot or do not provide? 2) Do the benefits of City membership in NOVA Parks match the costs to City residents?, 3) What percentage of City residents use each of the parks in the NOVA Parks system?, 4) Which NOVA Parks locations are owned and which are leased?, and 5) Are the terms of the NOVA Parks leases comparable to the existing and/or proposed City lease for Cameron Run?

A. (Gilbert) Burke Lake is not, but Pohick Bay, Bull Run Park are parks the survey showed that 20% of City residents visit. These are 1000 + acres parks with lots of natural areas, camp grounds and other amenities. He said our mission is to build large destination parks that draw from a larger area, not community parks that serve a local audience

Q. Does NOVA Parks lease all of its park facilities?

A. (Gilbert) NVRPA leases three parks: Cameron Run Regional Park, Occoquan Regional Park in Fairfax County (they entered into a 99-year lease two years ago). They just leased properties from the City of Falls Church and Fairfax County for 99 years for a Civil War Museum. For NOVA Parks, 40 years is considered a short-term lease. We've been here for over 55 years and expect to be here in the future.

Q. If the current lease was to expand past the red line, what area would the lease cover?

A. (Gilbert) Gilbert showed the area of lease, and said there is not a lot that can be done around Lake Cook, due to the Resource Protection Area (RPA). Gilbert said NOVA Parks does not have any immediate plans for the area, but one day they hope to get structured parking, and different water features. He said that they also plan to request a change in zoning, because as they look at adding major water park features, there are not many that can fit under the 30 ft. height limit.

Their current slides average 45 ft.; there are others that are higher. They were able to find something that would fit under the height limit. The Master Blaster (roller coaster) is long but not too tall.

Q. Please provide clarification on the lease, is it a renewal, extension or a new lease?

A. (Gilbert) Gilbert said he hasn't seen a copy of the draft lease recently. NOVA Parks provided the City a draft lease based on the old lease, which would be a new lease with the old term of 40 years.

Q. What are the parameters of existing lease, and boundary points? If NOVA Parks installed a parking structure, would tree canopy be replaced elsewhere on the property?

A. (Gilbert) One day NOVA Parks may want to build a parking structure or add a lazy river water feature to the park. The current request is to add the Master Blaster. In order to keep a water park at its prime, new features should be added every 5 to 10 years. He said the lease boundaries would not change. He does not want to close off all options for the future expansion. Over the last 33 years NVRPA has given back land to the City for the Animal Shelter and Hensley Park. As a result they are feeling very confined right now in terms of future expansion.

Poulin took issue with the statement that NOVA Parks is "giving back" land that they are using for free. The City pays NOVA Parks over a half million dollars a year to provide use of the land for free. However as the City's legal requirements for stormwater management and tree canopy increase, the City's need for land is becoming more constrained. She asked if all jurisdictions contribute the same amount of land.

Gilbert said all six jurisdictions contribute the same per capita amount of money, and are all members of the regional park authority and receive in-jurisdiction rates when using the regional parks. He said part of the reason NOVA Parks was founded is because there was not enough large areas and open space in the suburbs, and there was a desire to have large recreation spaces. Gilbert said the per capita amount is the same for Fairfax County, Arlington County, and Alexandria City and not directly related to the lease.

Baum said her understanding is that the City has a membership fee and the City gives NOVA Parks money for capital improvements. She asked if these two things are separate.

Gilbert said the amount of money Alexandria pays is approximately \$4.60 per person; of this half goes to subsidize operations, and half goes to capital development. On the operating side the amount that all jurisdictions contribute is 15% of NOVA Parks's operating budget. NOVA Parks generates 85% of operating revenues through enterprise operations.

Cromley said that if City residents were actually using all of the other NOVA Parks properties, then City residents were getting a good deal for their membership, since City membership fees are calculated on a per capita basis.

Q. What percentage of the 85% revenue is from Cameron Run Regional Park? It has been said this is a cash cow for NOVA Parks.

A. (Gilbert) Gilbert said he's not sure off-hand. Cameron Run Regional Park is one of the facilities that generates revenue; Carlyle House is also a major resource as well. Gilbert said NOVA Parks operates five very popular parks, and that Cameron Run Regional Park is their biggest water park. This is why it is important for them to be able to keep and develop it.

Q. How do the terms of this lease compare to others?

A. (Gilbert) They are similar. The lease at Occoquan is 99 years, and Cameron Run Regional Park, 40 yrs. The leases are very similar, in that they provide NOVA Parks pretty much all the rights of ownership. They have the right to develop the parks although they do not own them. They must through local government for any major changes.

Q. How much of the Cameron Run Regional Park is useable all year round?

A. (Gilbert) Gilbert said the batting cages are open all year round, and mini-golf, the giant play structure are open most of the year. They close January and February. He said there are shelters that are available for rent, and Lake Cook is available year round and stocked with fish.

Q. Are there admissions fees for the play structure?

A. (Gilbert) The play structure is set up so that during water park season it can be accessed and during non-water park season it can be enclosed. He said there is a small fee for this, and then there is the mini-golf which makes for a nice destination this time of the year.

Q. Does the lease submitted to the City stipulate improvements to be made over time?

A. (Gilbert) No, it would be difficult to say what would be developed over 30 years. He said there was a Synthesis Plan that had a lot of items in it that never took root. He said that plans should probably not go out past 5 years. He said that the City has received significant investment from NOVA Parks in this facility as well as Carlyle House, and that NOVA Parks is constantly investing money in both facilities to make them premium sites.

Cromley expressed concern with the cost of using the park. He said he has four children, and considers the prices high, and asked how rates would be affected by any expansion plans. He said many people cannot afford to use the park and asked if a lease renewal could be conditioned on a revision of the fee structure to make it affordable to all. Cromley said he opposed the St. James Group proposal, because it was essentially a rich man's health club. He stressed that just because a facility is profitable doesn't mean that's a good deal for City residents.

Gilbert said the fees are partly dictated by the market. The City competes with two other premium water parks in the area, e.g. Six Flags Park, in Maryland, and Splashdown Waterpark, in the Manassas, Virginia. Cameron Run Regional Park prices are below the others. He said if we out-priced ourselves, people would not visit the park. He believes users of Cameron Run Regional Park view the park as a very cost-effective vacation, within a short travel distance, where people can have an amazing experience, at an amazing value.

Q. Why does he believe the trail proposal will hem NVRPA in?

A. (Gilbert) The plan proposes to create areas for trails which may restrict usage in the future. NOVA Parks doesn't plan to use it now but doesn't like the idea that it will be off limits forever. Cameron Run Park needs to be a premiere water park and it should not be hemmed in for the future.

Beggs said that open space and tree canopy are very important to the City, and that cutting down native trees down and taking away open space is not good.

Gilbert said he appreciates this, and that NOVA Parks manages over 11,000 acres of open space and 100 miles of trails. There is a sidewalk there that provides fantastic vehicle multi-modal

access and the only reason to do something right here is to try to take something out of the way. He said that the City has never planned Cameron Run Regional Park and probably should not, it should be a Regional Park planned by them in the future.

Q. How many people are employed at Cameron Run Regional Park each year?

A. (Gilbert) Gilbert said NOVA Parks has a few full-time staff, but employs approximately 70 summer seasonal staff as lifeguards and attendants. NOVA Parks is a major employer of the City's youth in the summer, which is a great public service.

Public Comments:

1. Bonnie Petry, 4405 Vermont Ave., Alexandria, Virginia (See Written Statement):

Ms. Petry spoke on behalf of preserving the remaining natural areas in the Eisenhower Valley. When looking at the Eisenhower Valley, what you see in green portion is the remaining natural areas in the Eisenhower Valley. She agrees it is a unique destination site. Petry said the area known as Wards Woods, and the Clermont Natural Area contains a number of native species and a lot of mature trees that provide value and help filter water, and should be preserved and protected. She said the area used to be known as the City dump but has a lot of possibilities. Petry said people buy houses in areas where there are trees and natural areas which provide buffer, which is an asset to future development plans. Ms. Petry said the Wards Wood area – looking at the entire Holmes Run drainage, Backlick Run and Cameron Run drainage areas, what you have is the only undisturbed natural area. The soil that has not been torn up for industrial use, or had trashed dumped there, contains wildflowers that are not found anywhere else. Lester Frank Woods the father of American Botany initially surveyed the area known as “Wards Woods” after the Civil War.

Petry said she lives in the Wakefield Tarleton neighborhood, and she regularly walks her dog near there and she is familiar with the area. In the summer months, and when the water park is open, she sees heavy utilization of the area. She believes many of the vehicles come from out of state, possibly Maryland, not Alexandria residents. She said that Commissioners should take a tour of the area.

Regarding the picnic area, she said there is heavy utilization, and there are mountains of trash there, including dirty diapers over the Saturday weekend. Petry said there is a need for improved trash management in the park. Ms. Petry said that she jogs by the Lake Cook area and that there is wildlife and rabbits here. Within the past year, she noticed that 12 or more healthy mature native trees had been cut down, however there were some highly invasive trees were left there. Petry said this does not show careful stewardship on behalf of the NVRPA. Another time she noticed survey tape on trees in the back, surveying to expand into the only remaining undisturbed area of the Cameron Run Stream Bank. She spoke with RPCA Natural Resources staff about this. What is known as Cameron Run is Army Corp of Engineering Project.

Petry said there should be a high value placed on maintaining trees and natural areas. There are many natural features and unique trees in the area such as Bartram's Oak and Beadle's Oak trees. Ms. Petry said that she finds it odd that NOVA Parks made no mention of these unique natural resources in the area in its presentation. She said that there is an incredible variety of wildlife value in this area (little green herons, great blue herons, varieties of turtles and snakes, etc.), and that this means a lot to people and needs to be protected.

Petry said she would recommend a shorter lease term with NOVA Parks, because this would offer the City maximum flexibility. She said that the park does have some positive amenities that people enjoy. She said that there will be many new residents moving into the area, and the demographics will change. Additionally, there has been interest expressed in maintaining open space and trails.

Regarding the financial details, important considerations in bringing a recommendation to City Council, is for staff to do their research on the value of tree canopy, open space and nature, and how this enhances property values. There means a lot of citizens. Ms. Petry asked the Commission and RPCA staff to please protect the last bit of natural areas that the City has left.

2. Susan Gitlin, 609 Little St., Alexandria, Virginia, and citizen member of the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC), spoke in favor of preserving the four plus acres of woods now under lease to NOVA parks.

Gitlin said that the EPC has discussed this issue but did not take an official vote yet as they have not had a chance to view the plans. The EPC reached a consensus and agree that it is essential to save the area known as Wards Woods. Baum asked if staff has a history of the Wards Woods area. Gitlin said she believes that have been completed, by Robert (Bob) Taylor's Group, RPCA Natural Resources Division. Tiwari said Taylor can provide information.

Gitlin said the soils in this area are unique, different even than those across the railroad tracks. These undisturbed soils provide for a range of spring ephemeral wildflowers and other plants that are rare in this region. She said that some trees are a century to centuries old, and are irreplaceable. This is invaluable in terms of people experiencing and being educated about nature. These woods are also essential to addressing the City's environmental goals, including stormwater management and tree canopy. The City is struggling to meet its tree canopy goal of 40% and currently is only at 33%, and is already overly dependent on open space and parks to meet this goal, and cutting trees work against this goal.

She also noted that currently the area is not being maintained or protected. It contains invasive plants, trees have been removed, and there are signs that NOVA Parks is using it as a site for dumping landscaping waste. This affects the soil quality and leads to growth of invasive plants. Ms. Gitlin said she would be happy to work with the EPC to provide a letter of support of the draft plan to the Commission.

3. Elizabeth Wright, 113 S. Ingram Street, Alexandria, Virginia, spoke in favor of preserving, protecting the natural, native sensitive park and City land.

Ms. Wright provided photos taken this past Sunday. Wright said she grew up a Girl Scout. She cares about and is interested in nature, and protecting what's valuable. She doesn't care where the Wave Pool expands, as long as the tree area (Wards Woods) is removed from the NOVA Parks lease and is protected. Wright said that the tree area should be given a name and to call this area "the trees" devalues a unique area. The name is Wards Woods, named after the Smithsonian botanist Lester Ward who conducted the first botanical survey of the area that is now Cameron Run Park after the Civil War. Ward's records of this site are accessible for research and available on the internet. City Naturalist, Rod Simmons has also done a botanical survey of the same area. If you compare the current list with the original list it will be interesting to see how similar, how little the area flora has changed in the past 150 years. She has learned

that native natural hybrid trees are rare and they don't occur in areas that have been disturbed. There are two rare oaks in this area, a Bartram oak (a cross between red and willow oak) and a Beadles oak (a cross between a swamp and white oak). The Beadles oak is the only known specimen in all of Northern Virginia.

Wright shared a visual/picture on her Blackberry showing the trees and debris sites. She said that 12 trees were cut down recently, to expand an area for additional picnic tables, this doesn't make sense. As a former teacher, she is all about control, and thinks the picnic tables would be better placed inside the fence with the wave pool, or another area of the property. She expressed concern that there are no trash cans over by the new picnic area. Wright said this land has never been formerly cultivated for agriculture or used for industrial purposes. The reason we know this is because of the spring ephemeral flowers that bloom there; Spring Beauty. She said these flowers are low, carpet like, and last for just a few days. Wards Woods and Tarleton Park are two areas to view these rare flowers. When you see these flowers in their native habitat, this is sure sign that the land has been undisturbed, for millennia. I can't stress how rare and unique this is. If these woods are cut down or diminished in any way, we are losing the little bit of rare, undisturbed flora.

Last Sunday, when she visited the area to understand why it needs to be protected, the geologist Tony Fleming showed us the contour of the land that clearly shows this area was the original stream bed for Cameron Run. This area was a low land that flooded often, so it was never developed or used. In the old days, people knew that where it floods, you let nature do its thing. It's not like it is today where people will build in a floodplain. Cattle may have grazed here yet other than floodplain grazing, the land has been undisturbed. Wright said if you can't build within 100 feet of an RPA, then she votes to extend Lake Cook all the way back towards the west so that all of these woods will be within 100 feet if that's what it will take to protect the trees.

The other thing she noticed about the site was there were several landscape waste piles where vegetative matter had been dumped. Ornamental invasive species planted within the park were dumped close to and within the wooded area. First, to dump on site like this appears to be indiscriminate dumping, these were not proper compost sites. Next, the loose soil and the manner of the waste dumping lends to a quick and invasive spread of these non-native plants right into the pristine undisturbed area. What the City has in Wards Woods is a natural and native treasure, and once it's gone, it can't be recreated. We should not allow an expansion of the Wave Pool park to rob Alexandria of the unique sensitive area that we have now. Ms. Wright supports having the wooded, natural areas removed from the lease agreement

Additional Ms. Wright said she works for FEMA currently – she said whatever is done should be documented well, in order to get 75% from the federal government. She proposed that staff state as part of any new lease since the City is an Eco-City should include that any plantings should be native to the area.

4. Dave Levy, 309 E. Nelson Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia.

Levy said he is a former Sierra Club leader and used to take hikes with others and view natural areas. Wilderness does not count unless it is in your own back yard. He asked if NOVA Parks has a natural resources person on staff, and if so, have they evaluated this site. He believes if NOVA Parks had a natural resources person on staff, they would have not cut those trees down.

Levy requested that a full evaluation be done of all the natural resources in this area. He said this is a unique wildlife corridor and natural area that is millions of years in creation. He said the area probably does not meet the federal government's standards of a wilderness area because the area was most likely farmed, and trees cut over the years, but the area contains many older trees.

Levy said that since the NOVA Parks lease is expiring soon, staff should prohibit NOVA Parks from touching this land. He said the picnic area may need to be removed to help provide a buffer. He said commercial manufactured recreation e.g. the park, should not take precedence over the unique natural resources in this area, which are millions of years old. This area is no less important than Old Town. He said that between the RPCA and NVRPA, the land needs to be evaluated by the Naturalists before anything else is touched or developed, and that some areas may need to be reclaimed for the City. He believes there is a chance to have a combined park and natural resources experience at this location.

5. Suzanne Dingwell, 418 Ferdinand Day Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, Director at Large, Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, spoke in support of maintaining open space and natural areas.

Dingwell said that early in Ms. Durham's presentation, there were two places where the survey showed what the residents of Alexandria wanted most. The first priority shown was walking and biking trails, and the second was wildlife, habitat and protection of natural areas. She said this shows a clear choice. She said she was taken by the historical value of this land, and that these natural areas are very important, just like Old Town. There exists lots of documentation from the early surveys done of this area. The area has a clear botanical value, due to the fact that some soils are undisturbed; she said there is an incredible seed bank of soil memory in this area which is rare and hard to find. She said that scientists are not inventing new things that help with medicine, what they are doing is looking at natural occurrences and trying to replicate things, such as the natural healing properties of plants. There is a lot of botanical value in undisturbed soil and native species.

Dingell said we can't turn back the clock, but we can stop destroying what is left. We need to put a value on this land, tree canopy is irreplaceable. We have to make some hard choices of what we value and what we want to invest in. She believes in investing in Wards Woods is important. In Chicago, this week there is a push to retrofit old tenements and green in old alleys ways. She said the City should not get rid of valuable green space that is left.

(Note: See Attachment letter signed by Alan Ford, President Potowmack Chapter of Virginia Native Plant Society, dated December, 11, 2014)

Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator noted that two comments were received by email and will be made part of the record (from Bill Rivers and Caroline Griglione). A summary of the emails is contained below as reference.

6. Bill Rivers, Chair, Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics, email received November 18, 2014, regarding Cameron Run Wave Pool:

The AAA Board met last night and discussed the Regional Park Authority's request before your Commission this Thursday regarding renewal of the long term lease on the site and the addition of other features to the Park. Last month, we heard from Council members about the need for a

public pool in the West End. We already have that pool - it's the wave pool. Alexandria already contributes about \$600,000 per year (operating and capital dollars) to the Authority for use of the pool. It makes little sense to commit more dollars to a "new" pool in the West End when we already spend more per year at an existing one than we do for outdoor pools. It is also the best outdoor pool in the City in terms of amenities. The only real difference is that its pricing is higher than our other public pools.

AAA recommends that the Commission encourage the City Administration and City Council to utilize this application process as a negotiation opportunity. As we understand it, not only does Alexandria pay its share of the pool's costs, but the land is leased free of charge. There should be some concessions by NOVA Parks during this process to make this a better business arrangement for Alexandria. The Park Authority should be asked to suggest ways for Alexandria to better benefit from the financial arrangements: The pool doesn't open until 11:00 am during the day. Can the early morning be used for swimming lessons for Alexandria's waiting list of kids? Can Alexandria residents use the pool at a discounted rate earlier in the day - or later in the day? What incentive is there for Alexandria to renew the lease and approve additional features? How can we work with NOVA Parks to make the Wave Pool the answer for our West End needs?

This is a unique opportunity for Alexandria to solve a long standing perception in the West End that there is no public pool there. Let's maximize use of existing resources and work with the NOVA Parks to meet their needs and our needs at the same time. As always, AAA stands ready to provide whatever assistance is needed. Please let us know if you need any further information.

7. Carolyn Grigilone, Alexandria Virginia, via email, November 19, 2014, regarding the wave pool.

She would like to see the length of the lease agreement shortened to at most ten years. Forty years is beyond reasonable, and does not make any sense to me. Unless things have drastically changed since the last time I was there, fifteen years ago, there is little option for lap swimming. There is zero entry in the wave section. I think the pool has limitations.

I also wonder why the Rec Commission is not asking why the facility is not changed to an indoor facility that could be used year round, which would be a much better use of the City's scarce land resources. It appears the NOVA Parks takes in large revenues that could be used to construct an enclosure. Even the St. James Group saw the value in this approach. She sees the facility as an option for a family/leisure facility. With the right agreement this might offer an option for a family/leisure pool and remove the pressure to transform the current Chiquapin pool.

Since Alexandria has opted to provide the land (and pay to provide the land?) Alexandrians need to benefit from this arrangement. Ms. Grigilone would like to know how many people living within the City of Alexandria, not in Fairfax County with an Alexandria address, use the facility. She thinks the numbers might change a bit. How many cars in the parking lot have Alexandria City stickers showing they paid their car property tax would also be interesting. She thanks staff for their work on this issue particularly Laura Durham.

Commissioner Discussion:

Coleman and P&RC members reached a consensus to place this item on the January, 15 2015 agenda for a discussion of letter to City Council in February.

Cromley said he is sympathetic to NOVA Parks's position; however he is also sympathetic to the loss of valuable open space for use by the City. He said it seems that some sort of trade off is needed between the City and NOVA Parks. If the lease is renegotiated, and NOVA Parks is not able to get everything they are requesting, are there other concessions that could be made in the form of possibly height concessions. He suggested that Gilbert begin thinking of ways he can achieve his goals or make trade-offs.

Forbes asked Gilbert to respond to questions and concerns raised about the cutting down of trees, and dumping of yard waste. He asked if this is true. Gilbert said he will look into the yard waste issue; it may have been dumped by someone else, which would not be uncommon. He will look into this and can get this yard waste removed. Regarding the tree cutting, there is a picnic area and last summer they had a dead tree and a large limb fell down, so their staff cut down a couple of trees with dead limbs on them, and with some invasive.

Forbes asked if there is a picnic area to the right of the batting cage. He said he is concerned about the tree cutting issue, and could foresee recommending that the City remove the picnic area, and that there be no development allowed in this area. He asked Gilbert if removing this area from a future lease extension would adversely affect NOVA Parks since it does not receive revenue from this area. Gilbert said the picnic area is actually located to the left of the batting cage, and a picnic shelter is located to the right of the batting cage. He said the picnic area provides a nice amenity for the public to have, and allows them to bring their own food to the water park, rather than purchasing concessions from inside the park.

Forbes said he could see a decision being made to restore the picnic area back to wood since access to natural areas is an important value to Alexandria residents. He suspects that many picnic users may be from Maryland, not residents of Alexandria or other NOVA Parks jurisdictions. Gilbert said this is probably not one of the biggest issues for renewing the lease agreement.

Coleman said it would be helpful for the P&RC to develop a list of information requests for the next meeting in January. She asked Ms. Petry to provide written comments, and if Ms. Gitlin could provide a statement from the EPC. Coleman asked, Deputy Director Tiwari if RPCA Natural Resources staff could provide the historical survey information of the area.

Forbes asked RPCA staff to advise the P&RC whether the issue of environmental sensitivity of the area came up when the Animal Shelter was built. Durham said she can go back and review development case records.

Coleman also requested an update on the status of the lease document. Gilbert said NOVA Parks's permit is submitted and is progressing, but there is no answer on the lease yet.

Beggs asked him to send his draft lease.

Cromley asked Gilbert to provide a list of what he would like to see in the lease if he did lose the land.

Baum asked RPCA staff to outline the Resource Protection Areas (RPA) on the map.

Coleman requested to have information by January 8th, a week before the January 15, 2015 meeting.

Atkins thanked staff and Paul Gilbert for their attendance, and invited comments on non-agenda items.

III. Public Comments - non-agenda items:

1. Elizabeth Wright, Chair, Holmes Run Park Committee spoke about protecting the first developer proffer associated with the bowling alley site on South Pickett Street. The proffer was \$5,000 promised in 2012 by Steve Bannister to the HRPC to go towards expanding the Capital Bike Share Program in the West End. At the November 6, 2014 Planning Commission meeting the idea came up of redirecting the public art and bike share contributions to improvements in Ewald Park (See DSUP 2014-0004- 100 S. Pickett St.) Ms. Wright attended the meeting and requested that the funds be held in escrow until such a time that the funds could be used for a station in the West End near the site. She also lobbied City Council members. This past Saturday Council formalized a policy to keep proffers in the same Small Area Plan (SAP) for this area. Wright said one of the reasons she is passionate about that natural area, is they kind of view this as the South East anchor of the Holmes Run area. Ms. Wright wrote a letter to the Editor: Protect Proffers: published on November 13, 2014.

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2014/nov/13/letter-editor-protect-proffers>.

2. David Levy, 309 E. Nelson Ave., Alexandria, Virginia. Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, said he still plans to submit a letter to the P&RC from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee regarding preserving trails and completing the trail marker system and will reminding T&ES to complete the mile markers on the trails. As follow-up on the Cameron Run Regional Park, he asked if the City has a comprehensive City natural resources evaluation plan that would cover City properties, parks and private properties including the Mark Winkler property. The Four Mile Run project will come up as well, and the Virginia Dominion transmission line project, he asked if the City can get them to put the line in the creek. Levy said there are a lot of interconnected projects. Deputy Director Tiwari said staff is working on developing the first natural resources management plan for the City, with expected completion by July 2015. Following completion the plan will be opened it up for public comments, and then go before City Council.

IV. Items for Action:

a. Approval of Summary Minutes: October 9, 2014.

ACTION: Brune motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Beggs seconded. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Items for Information and discussion: None

VI. Division Updates: To view full staff reports please go to <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCMERGEDREPORTSNOVEMBER202014.pdf>

- A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update – David A. Miller, Division Chief:** – See Staff Report. William Chesley, Deputy Director was absent, there were no comments from Miller.
- B. **Park Operations Report - Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director:** See Staff Report. Tiwari said the 2014 Facility & Outdoor Maintenance Use Agreement, between the Schools (ACPS), and Recreation Department (RPCA), has been approved and is available online on the City's website.
http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/parks/ApprovedMOU_COA_ACPS.pdf
- C. **Public Relations, Special Events and Waterfront Operations - Jack Browand, Division Chief:** See Staff Report. A Joint Public Hearing with the Waterfront Commission (WFC) and Park and Recreation Commission (P&RC) – will be held on December 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Lee Center, to obtain public input on priorities and future phasing and funding of the City's Waterfront Plan. On December 3rd, the City will host a Waterfront Community Open House to receive public comments on priorities for the Waterfront Plan implementation (see handout). Results from the December 3rd Open House, will be provided to the Commissions on December 11. The WFC will provide their recommendation on December 16, and the P&RC will provide a recommendation following their January 15, 2015 meeting. Staff's goal is to bring a recommendation forward to City Council in January.

Other - The City has established two construction coordination work groups: Carr Development Group, who is ready to begin construction and the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC), who will begin construction on their new clubhouse within the next 6-9 months. Robinson Terminal South will have phasing in of the public amenities. An Internal Work Group has been formed comprised of representatives from T&ES, RPCA, Department of Project Implementation, Code Enforcement and Planning and Zoning. The City Manager will announce members of the External Work Group, which will include one representative from the Waterfront Commission (John Bordner), Old Town Civic Association (Katy Cannady), Chamber of Commerce (Charlotte Hall). One area resident at large representative– Bert Ely, a nearby Homeowner Associations representative (rotating position), and one Developer representative, the first one will be a Carr representative. Browand said that the Supreme Court of Virginia will hear the appeal in the case of the procedural matter leading up to the text amendment, which sets up the plan related to the zoning ordinances in that area. The decision of the Virginia Supreme Court does not affect City work plans and it is anticipated that the Court will hear the case and render a decision within the next 6 to 9 months. The City does not anticipate any construction activities to occur at the Carr site before the end of this year. Browand said he will send out an announcement about the December 11 public hearing. He encouraged members to attend the December 13 meeting.

Marina Dredging will begin December, 3 2014; substantial completion is expected by the end of January (permit requirements states completion by February 14, 2015); Blackwall Hitch Restaurant is moving along with expected to open by mid-March 2015. As part of their condition they are allowing the City to use the public restrooms; Wharf shore up will occur next month and be completed by the end of the year.

- D. **Park Planning, Design & Capital Development Reports – Ron Kagawa, Division Chief - Please See Staff Reports:** Kagawa said he will save part of his time to discuss the Diamond Field report. Updates given: Hoofs Run Playground is complete; Jefferson Houston School, the synthetic turf field was installed last week, and infill is being put in, and it is expected to

open in the spring of 2015; Buchanan Park basketball court is underway; however the synthetic playground will not be put in until the spring.

- **Update on Oakville Triangle/Mt. Jefferson Greenway.** Durham said the first public meeting on Mt. Jefferson Park was held on Tuesday, turnout was approximately 60 attendees, and the community is very engaged. An update will given to the P&RC in January. Atkins - feedback from neighbors was that they were pleased with how the meeting was run.
- **Update on Neighborhood Park Plans.** Durham said that three community workshops were held, the last one was held November 1. Overall, there was not huge attendance at the meetings, but the graffiti boards have been a success, as well as the surveys.

VII. Director's Report – James Spengler. Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Development gave update.

a. **Update on the Diamond Field Study (Initial Analysis): See Staff Report.**

Kagawa said that in 2012 an inventory was completed of all the rectangular fields in the City (City-owned and school-owned). The objective was to get an inventory of field use, issues and concerns from the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB), as citizen representatives of various sports. Staff has since used this information to identify Capital Budget items and help establish priorities. In October 2014 staff worked with the YSAB again to evaluate the City's Diamond Fields use capacity. The study showed that there are areas for improvement. It appears that there is enough field space to meet current need. Recreation Services will complete a migration to real-time based scheduling instead of block scheduling. Doing so is anticipated to increase field capacity as an initial alternative to building new fields. The document (provided to P&RC) outlines the process and the attachment (last two pages) shows the raw comments from the Youth Sports Advisory Board Field Exercise. If more space is needed, the first field to use will be Stevenson Field because it has parking and a dimensional capacity, and a generally reasonable topography capable of accommodating work.

Baum asked for an explanation of hourly vs. block scheduling. Kagawa said often fields may be scheduled (for example) in a three hour block, but that actual team use may be different. For example, if actual team use were an hour, there is potential to gain capacity by scheduling two additional users. Baum said as there are competing interests on fields and as RPCA deals with economic shortfalls, it is important to gain control over who is using the fields and scheduling. Improvements to scheduling may allow the City to have some time left on fields that can be sold to private entities – this may allow greater use of fields and cost recovery. Atkins thanked Kagawa and RPCA for undertaking this process.

VIII. Reports from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. **Waterfront Commission - Baum:** See Item # VI-C earlier. Baum said the Waterfront Commission was briefed on the Public Art Implementation Plan. A question was raised about the King St. Gardens Hat Sculpture (near Diagonal Rd., and King St.). Baum said some people would like to see the art piece decommissioned because it blocks the view. The Art & History people will work with the artist to try to improve the sculpture before it would get decommissioned. There is a process for decommission. 500/501 N. Union

- Street another presentation was given by the developer. The architectural plans for the glass building may be modified. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BAR) likes the glass on the east side of the building which faces the water, but desires to see more brick on the west side of the building, in keeping with the character of Alexandria.
- B. **Youth Sports Committee - McPherson** said he wasn't able to attend the meeting; however feedback is that the focus was the Diamond Fields Analysis Study.
 - C. **Eisenhower West - Coleman:** The consultant came back with a visual of the initial concept plan for the area, which was delivered near the end of another meeting. The Steering Committee scheduled another meeting on this upcoming Monday. There is a community meeting on December 8 to discuss the overlay plan. For purposes of the P&RC the greenway and open space are a large part of the public feedback process and is reflected in the concept plan. The consultant is proposing adding a park on the other side of Van Dorn Street. Coleman said this is a forty year plan. A visual will be provided at the January meeting.
 - D. **Aquatics Update - Atkins:** City Council acted on the P&RC letter and recommendation to close Warwick Pool due to safety concerns. Atkins received some positive feedback from Council that the P&RC was thorough in their recommendation. There was some contention regarding discussion on a West End pool. Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA) are holding a kickoff fundraiser on November 22 at Chinquapin Aquatics Center. Atkins plans to attend and will try to send around information. Durham said the meeting begins at 6:00 p.m. Poulin said Browand sent out information in advance of meeting.
 - E. **Four Mile Run - Forbes:** no updates.
 - F. **Ft. Ward - Forbes:** The draft Ft. Ward Management Plan goes before City Council on December 9, 2014. Atkins said she will finalize the draft letter.
 - G. **Braddock Plan Park:** Durham reported that the interim open space will be done by December. **Cromley** has been advocating that the space not be redeveloped as originally planned. He said that now that the Post Office building is gone there is an opportunity for a beautiful plan.
 - H. **Patrick Henry School Update –McPherson:** McPherson said this is in the very early stages. Kagawa indicated that Sorg Associates has been retained as the Architect/Engineer team lead. McPherson said it would be good to have a backup representative on the school project in case he cannot make the January meeting. Coleman said she may be able to attend meetings when Eisenhower West SAP winds down. Kagawa said a building assessment is being completed now and that it is a part of the initial feasibility study scope of work for the School. There are three feasibility scenarios: 1) demolish and construct a new school; 2) renovate in place and add to the school; 3) renovate in place. It is anticipated that a decision will be before the School Board in May, 2015. City staff's position (as confirmed in the previous feasibility study for the Recreation Center) is to construct a new Center. Initial information will be before the P&RC in February/ March 2015.

I. **Jefferson Houston School - Cromley:** The school has been constructed; and staff is waiting on the fields to be completed. Coleman said this item will remain on the agenda for now.

J. **Open Space - Jennifer Atkins:** no update.

K. **ACPS & Capital Improvements:** no-update.

L. **ACPS School Projects:** no update.

M. **Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group- Beggs** said at the last meeting the majority looked at the overall study. Another meeting will be held this week. Beggs said he will find out what the timetable is.

N. **Dominion Power Transmission Line Work Group – Poulin:** Poulin said a meeting is being held tonight. The Work Group is finalizing a letter to City Council with suggestions on the least objectionable route for the transmission line in City. Poulin said options include: preferred routes are - up the side of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, using CSX lines, or going up the Potomac and Four Mile Run. If Dominion must run lines through the City, the Work Group's recommendation is to use Slater's Lane, and go up Potomac Avenue. The Work Group said all other routes through the City including Mt. Jefferson Park and Route 1 should be vigorously fought. Poulin said Dominion Power is not expected to provide further information until their plan is submitted to the State Corporation Commission (SCC) within the next few weeks, however this may be postponed. Once Dominion submits its plan to the SCC, the Work Group will have more information for discussion.

IX. **Agenda items for January 15, 2015 meeting:** Coleman deferred discussion of January agenda items until later, location preference is Charles Houston. The Commission will hold a Retreat in December 2014. Robin was asked to consolidate the Commissioner poll, afterwards the date will be chosen.

X. **Adjournment:** Brune motioned to adjourn. Forbes seconded. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.